

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**A Permanent Special Operations Liaison Element (SOLE): A Regional Approach**

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## ABSTRACT

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This paper proposes establishing permanent Special Operations Liaison Elements (SOLE) and assigning them to Joint Force Commanders (JFC), in the key theaters. The SOLE is the liaison organization linking special operations with the conventional air component. It works in the air component's air operations center and ensures special operations actions and conventional air activity is a unified effort. This proposal modifies efforts already underway by United States Special Operations Command to build permanent SOLE organizations.

Based on policy, theory and examination of four examples, three options are developed and one option is selected. First, from national policy, the future seems to suggest a force with joint entities trained and equipped to rapidly integrate and act as one. Second, from command and control theory, organizations must be able to command varied amounts of discreet entities, balance hands-on with hands-off control in various environments and orchestrate joint and service methods to meet campaign objectives. Third, four examples illustrate some significant points to consider when creating permanent integrating organizations to deal with the complexity of commanding and controlling joint operations. The options are developed and one is selected. The selected option balances theater effectiveness while not ignoring the constraints of resources and personnel.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	III
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	VII
A PERMANENT SPECIAL OPERATIONS LIAISON ELEMENT (SOLE): A REGIONAL APPROACH.....	1
<b>THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS LIAISON ELEMENT.....</b>	<b>1</b>
SOLE ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION.....	2
SOLE AS LIAISON.....	3
SOLE RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE AOC.....	4
SOLE RELATIONSHIP WITH SPECIAL OPERATIONS TACTICAL COMPONENTS.....	5
<b>STRATEGY, POLICY, AND FORCE STRUCTURE SUPPORTS JOINT INTEGRATION..</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>COMMAND AND CONTROL IN JOINT ORGANIZATIONS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
BALANCE WITHIN JOINT ORGANIZATIONS .....	8
BOUNDARIES OF COMMAND AND CONTROL.....	9
<b>HOW PERMANENT INTEGRATING ORGANIZATIONS CAN FACILITATE COMMAND AND CONTROL.....</b>	<b>12</b>
THE SJFHQ.....	13
<b>Background.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>The Standing Joint Force Headquarters (SJFHQ).....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>SJFHQ Function .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Assessment. ....</b>	<b>16</b>
BATTLEFIELD COORDINATION DETACHMENT.....	17
<b>Background.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Defining the BCD.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>BCD function.....</b>	<b>18</b>
CURRENT PERMANENT SOLE EFFORTS .....	19
<b>US-based SOLE.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Korea-based JSOLE.....</b>	<b>20</b>

COMMONALITIES .....	21
<b>Overarching characteristics of the SJFHQ, the BCD and the permanent SOLEs.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Common Policy Relationships.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Diverse Theory Relationships.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>THREE WAYS TO GO FROM HERE.....</b>	<b>24</b>
OPTION ONE: EXPAND THE SIZE OF THE CONUS-BASED SOLE TO HAVE THE CORE CAPABILITY TO RESPOND TO THE KEY THEATERS.....	24
OPTION TWO: ESTABLISH REGIONAL THEATER-BASED SOLES.....	26
OPTION 3: COMBINE THE LARGER US-BASED SOLE WITH THE REGIONAL THEATER-BASED SOLE .....	28
RECOMMENDATION.....	28
ENDNOTES.....	31
GLOSSARY .....	35
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	37

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE 1. SERVICE AND FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS OF JFC.....	2
FIGURE 2. SOLE RELATIONSHIP TO THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMPONENT AND THE CONVENTIONAL AIR COMPONENT (JFACC).....	3
FIGURE 3. ILLUSTRATES THE SOLE TO SPECIAL OPERATIONS TACTICAL COMPONENT LINK IN THE CONTEXT OF JFC STRUCTURE. THE SPECIFIC LINK BETWEEN SOLE AND JSOAC IS HIGHLIGHTED. ....	5
FIGURE 4. O-O-D-A LOOP .....	10
FIGURE 5. LAWSON'S MODEL SHOWING THREE LEVELS OF COMPLEXITY.....	11
FIGURE 6. THREE EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS FOR STANDING JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS.....	15
FIGURE 7. BCD IN THE AIR COMPONENT'S AIR OPERATIONS CENTER.....	18
FIGURE 8. HYBRID SOLE-JSOAC ORGANIZATION SPLITS TO BECOME CORE OF SOLE AND CORE OF JSOAC.....	27





## **A PERMANENT SPECIAL OPERATIONS LIAISON ELEMENT (SOLE): A REGIONAL APPROACH**

American Presidents frequently deploy special operations forces along with conventional air forces to accomplish strategic effects.<sup>1</sup> Do you recall the news photo of a special operations (SO) combat controller riding a horse in the Afghan desert while calling in air strikes? That picture exemplifies the evolving interrelationship between special operations and conventional air power. What enables the two forces to integrate their operations successfully is, in part, the command and control (C2) relationship made possible by a linking element between the Joint Forces special operations component and the Joint Forces conventional air component--the Special Operations Liaison Element (SOLE). The SOLE is a small but critical liaison element contributing to the unity of effort needed by the Joint Force Commander. The work of the SOLE helped enable the horseback-riding special operations combat controller interact with conventional aircraft to help deliver ordnance on target. Every theater should be able to quickly tie special operations activity and conventional air power together to enhance the joint task force commander's effectiveness. And, on a greater scale, every theater should be able to quickly and effectively link the C2 of any one expeditionary component with that of another. The critical question is how best to link warfighting components to achieve unity of effort for the JFC.<sup>2</sup>

This paper proposes establishing and assigning permanent SOLEs to Joint Force Commanders in the key theaters of operation; United States Central Command (USCENTCOM), United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) and United States European Command (USEUCOM). Building on the precedent of small scale efforts already underway by USSOCOM--a 15-man CONUS-based SOLE aligned to the geographic theaters and a 4-man theater-based permanent SOLE in the Korean theater of Operations--this paper suggests robust SOLEs be permanently forward-based, generally near the conventional air component headquarters in the key regional theaters of operation. This would ensure the in-theater presence of theater-smart and theater-credible individuals able to laterally link components (primarily air and special operations components but also other components within a JFC) and vertically link common command and control processes across levels of warfighting. It would also provide a permanent and professional staff that could smoothly and efficiently transition day-to-day staff relationships into effective warfighting relationships.

## **THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS LIAISON ELEMENT**

In any joint military campaign or operation a Joint Force Commander or a Joint Task Force Commander has a number of service or functional components assigned to his force.<sup>3</sup>

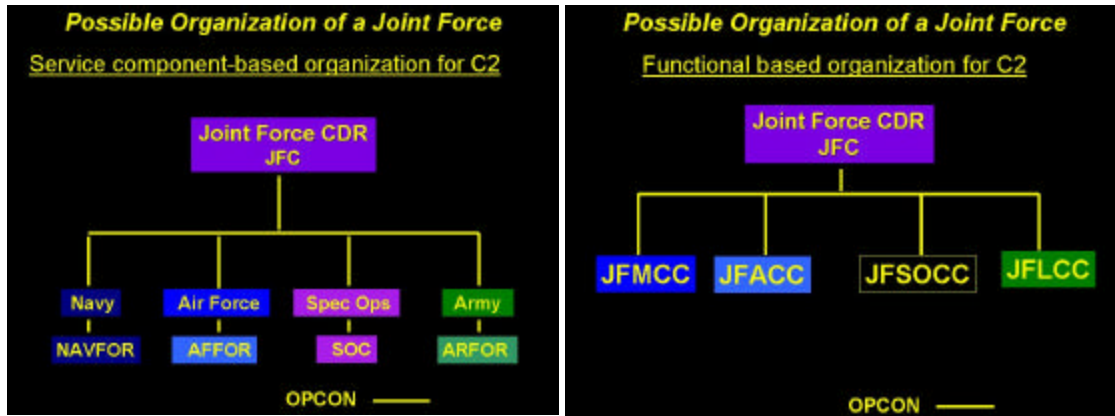


FIGURE 1. SERVICE AND FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS OF JFC

Establishing and maintaining horizontal and vertical integration of these components is critical to the quality of the Joint Force Commander's span of control (see Figure 1)<sup>4</sup>. The SOLE is a crucial voice linking the special operations component and its commander with the air component and its commander. The SOLE director, as the Joint Force Air Component Commander's (JFSOCC) primary liaison to the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC), ensures "[t]hat contact or intercommunication [is] maintained between elements...to ensure mutual understanding and unity of purpose and action."<sup>5</sup>

#### SOLE ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION

The SOLE is provided by the JFSOCC and attached to the organization led by the JFACC to ensure the Joint Force Commander's special operations activity and conventional air activity are a unified effort (see Figure 2)<sup>6</sup>. The SOLE employs a staff of subject-matter-experts (SMEs) with air, ground, and maritime special operations experience to assist the strategy, combat plans, combat operations, and the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance divisions within the AOC. To do its job the staff must understand theater procedures, air and special operations command and control systems and processes, and have credibility in both special operations tradecraft and in conventional air command and control. The SOLE's staff works with the JFACC's staff in the air component operations center (AOC) ensuring special operations activity and conventional air activity are a unified effort for the Joint Force Commander. The SOLE's staff coordinates, integrates, and deconflicts all special operations activity; it makes the air component aware of special operations units in the joint operating area, and it makes the special operations component aware of conventional air activity, airspace requirements and air defense parameters. It synchronizes special operations air and surface

actions with conventional joint air operations.<sup>7</sup> The SOLE's range of tasks is bounded by the command and control functions conducted within the air component's joint air operations center (JAOC) and the command and control functions conducted within the special operations component's joint operations center (JOC).

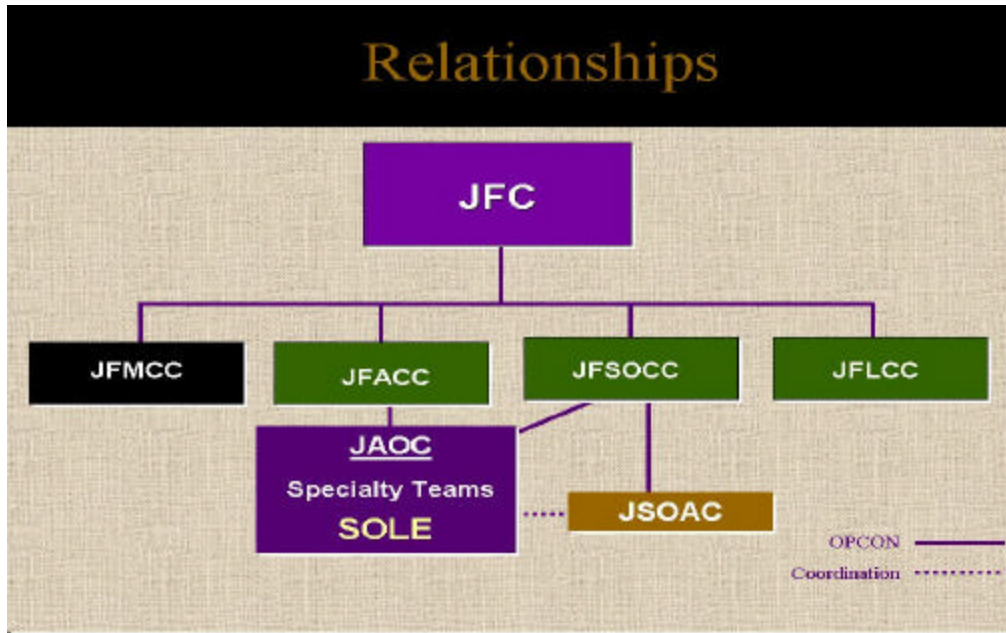


FIGURE 2. SOLE RELATIONSHIP TO THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMPONENT AND THE CONVENTIONAL AIR COMPONENT (JFACC)

#### SOLE AS LIAISON

The SOLE's director is a United States Air Force or Army colonel experienced in special operations aviation and conventional aviation command and control; he understands the formal and informal command and senior staff communication channels between the special operations component and the air component. This senior officer may be a mediator one moment and a negotiator the next.<sup>8</sup>

The SOLE director has a solid understanding of the special operations plan and has credibility with the air component commander and staff.<sup>9</sup> It is critical that the SOLE director and his staff have credibility. When an air component commander needs to make a decision that affects one of the other components, each of the component liaisons must have the ability to speak for their component's commander. Both director and staff must have the trust of both the air component and the special operations component so the "message" traveling between components and up to the JFC is clear and understood.

To build trust and credibility, the SOLE Director and staff must exhibit proficiency in the workings of the AOC and be able to interact with the JFACC as the special operations subject matter expert. For example, it is highly probable special operations forces will be in an area conducting operations before conventional joint force operations commence. It is incumbent upon the SOLE, as conventional air operations are getting underway, to understand and present the special operations picture to the air commander and quickly begin working as an integral part of the AOC. Clarifying the special operations picture to the air component is a function of trust, credibility and expertise.

#### SOLE RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE AOC

When the SOLE staff brings its special operations expertise to work for the air component, it is critical that SOLE personnel understand the functions and specialized tasks needed to work and interface with the air component staff. The heart of the joint air component's operations, the air operations center (AOC), is where operational level air planning and execution planning take place. Doctrinally, the joint force air component has eight responsibilities that set the tempo for operations in the AOC. It --

- Develops a joint air operations plan to support joint force objectives.
- Recommends to the JFC the apportionment of the joint air effort, after consulting with other component commanders.
- Provides centralized direction for allocating and tasking available capabilities and forces.
- Controls execution of joint operations as specified by the JFC.
- Coordinates joint air operations with operations of other component commanders and forces assigned to the JFC.
- Evaluates the results of joint air operations.
- When assigned by the JFC, serves as the airspace control authority (ACA) and/or as the area air defense commander (AADC).
- Functions as a supported and supporting commander as directed by the JFC.<sup>10</sup>

The SOLE concentrates on three of the above responsibilities; plans, operations and component liaison. First, in the Strategy and Plans Division within the AOC, the SOLE provides visibility of ongoing special operations planning and targeting efforts to the AOC strategists; relaying significant air component issues back to the joint special operations component. SOLE planners ensure planned air and surface special operations missions are included in the daily Air Tasking Order, deconflicted in time and space and resourced for air refueling or other support. Second, in the Combat Operations Division within the AOC, the SOLE, monitors the

current operational air picture and the missions being flown. SOLE personnel working with the Combat Operations staff deconflict special operations air, maritime, and ground missions as real-time changes occur in the conventional air operations plan or enemy situation. Finally, the SOLE is one of four functional or service military liaison teams residing in the AOC. The others include the Battlefield Coordination Detachment (BCD) representing the Army Component or Joint Land Force Component, Naval Air Liaison Element (NALE) representing the Naval Component or Joint Maritime Force Component and the Marine Liaison Officer (MARLO) representing the Marine Force Component. The SOLE's liaison function includes information sharing with each of the component teams residing in the AOC.<sup>11</sup>

#### SOLE RELATIONSHIP WITH SPECIAL OPERATIONS TACTICAL COMPONENTS

The SOLE not only works laterally among the special operations and air components, but vertically, linking the tactical and operational levels of warfighting. The SOLE working for the special operations component commander has as its primary doctrinal function cross-component integration as described above. However, to accomplish its mission the SOLE staff must also reach down one echelon to the actual special operations tactical component headquarters (air, ground and maritime) working for the overall Joint Special Operations Component. The habitual staff relationship between the SOLE and the special operations tactical component headquarters mitigates the tactical, operational and theater strategic levels of war distinctions.<sup>12</sup> It has the effect of flattening the warfighting organization (see figure 3).<sup>13</sup>

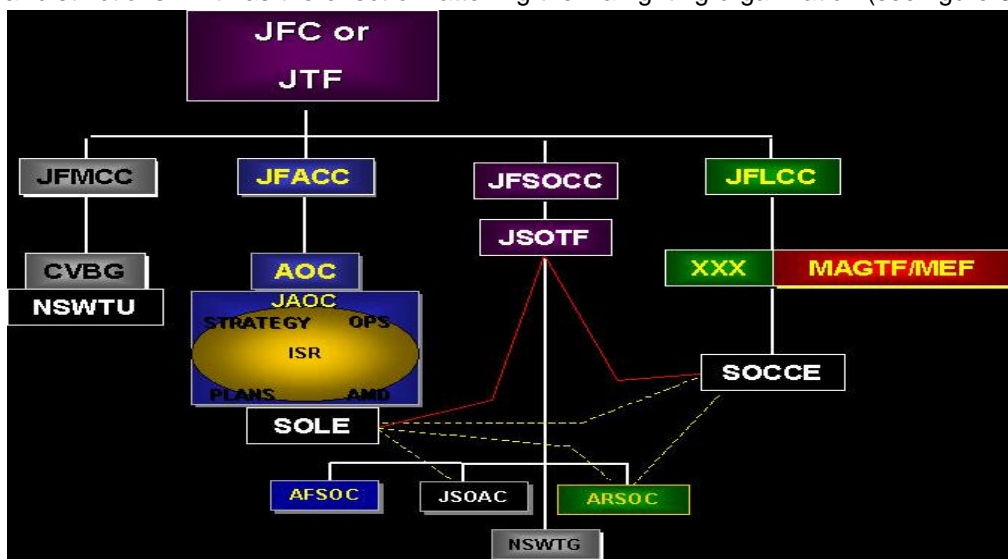


FIGURE 3. ILLUSTRATES THE SOLE TO SPECIAL OPERATIONS TACTICAL COMPONENT LINK IN THE CONTEXT OF JFC STRUCTURE. THE SPECIFIC LINK BETWEEN SOLE AND JSOAC IS HIGHLIGHTED.

The dynamic interaction between all (air, maritime, ground) of the special operations tactical component headquarters and the SOLE is beyond the scope of this paper. The discussion will be limited to the interaction between the SOLE and only one of the special operations tactical component headquarters; the Joint Special Operations Air Component (JSOAC).

The joint special operations air component, as the subordinate air headquarters of the special operations component, directly commands and controls special operations aviation and must ensure its sorties and support requests are included in the JFACC's overall air operations plan.<sup>14</sup> Historically, the JSOAC has been an ad hoc warfighting special operations aviation command and control headquarters populated from the Air Force special operations groups and the Army's 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Regiment. The JSOAC commander's ability to orchestrate and coordinate with the air component commander is dependent, in large part, on the vertical interface between the SOLE staff and portions of the JSOAC staff.

For example, the JFACC may require support from special operations aviation assets to support the air operations plan. The SOLE-to-JSOAC bridge is the unofficial pathway where the bulk of the coordination occurs. Not surprisingly, the staffs of the SOLE and the JSOAC have to understand the same processes and be proficient on the same systems to effectively synchronize, integrate, track and deconflict operations. The military occupational specialties and training requirements for the SOLE and JSOAC are similar. So much alike, in some cases, that members of the SOLE staff could work on the JSOAC staff and vice versa.<sup>15</sup>

Effective staff interaction between a SOLE staff and a JSOAC staff only thrives and develops with exposure and practice. Historically, since both of these organizations have been ad hoc, interaction has only occurred during contingencies and exercises. As the exercise or contingency progressed, the interaction between these two staffs improved. When the events ended the organizations were dismantled and the staff synergy ceased.

Recently USSOCOM, understanding the shortfalls of an ad hoc JSOAC, fielded a permanent JSOAC in the Pacific Theater to make the integration of aviation in the Pacific Theater more efficient and effective. The permanent Pacific Command JSOAC was created to serve as the permanent core of a warfighting tactical special operations air component headquarters and provide the command and control starting point for gained Air Force and Army special operations tactical aviation assets. The JSOAC is a tactical-and-lower-operational-level-focused organization as compared to the SOLE, which is focused at the operational level. However, the type of staff needed to run these organizations is very similar. They each seek to employ many of the same military occupational specialties and compete for a limited number of qualified personnel. The fact the SOLE and JSOAC compete for the same type of skill sets is a critical consideration when prioritizing resources and personnel required to

establish organizations.<sup>16</sup> It may be possible to combine staffs for a JSOAC and SOLE in a given theater and save billets.

## **STRATEGY, POLICY, AND FORCE STRUCTURE SUPPORTS JOINT INTEGRATION**

The vertical and lateral integrator role of the SOLE paints the picture of a multi-dimensional joint organization. This multidimensional capability is critical to strengthening joint interaction and is consistent with current military strategy and policy goals and objectives. Current policy guidance from the National Military Strategy (NMS) and the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) is to streamline joint operations. That policy guidance endorses the path started by the special operations strategic leadership to transform the SOLE from an ad hoc organization to one that is permanent. The services and functional combatant commands have seen the necessity of joint integration and have set aside resources for training in support of joint integration.<sup>17</sup> United States Special Operations Command's (USSOCOM) approach supports the work being conducted by United States Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) to evolve joint theater organizational design and to stand-up permanent joint command and control warfighting entities. The NMS and QDR emphasis combined with service/USSOCOM efforts to reorganize, prepare, train and equip its personnel to fight jointly portends a future force with greater permanent joint entities trained and equipped to rapidly integrate and act as one.

The National Military Strategy (NMS) and the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) emphasize a capability-based force with a focus on joint operations. The aim is to improve unified action and warfighting effectiveness. The NMS advocates a capabilities-based approach to meet a host of operational challenges.<sup>18</sup> To synchronize or, ideally, to integrate a capabilities based force, joint operations must be strengthened. The QDR specifies,

Joint forces must be scalable and task-organized into modular units to allow the combatant commander to draw on appropriate forces and must be highly networked with joint command and control and must be better able to integrate into combined operations.<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, the military must deploy force packages with the capability to be fused or integrated with each other, plug into theater procedures, systems and interface with indigenous military. The QDR is clear about the rigor needed for the joint environment, "joint and combined interoperability requires forces that can immediately 'plug' into the joint battlefield operating systems and perform effectively".<sup>20</sup> The QDR goes on to state,

Future military responses will require the rapid movement and integration of joint and combined operations. Such a joint C2 structure must reside not only at the joint command, but also extend down to the operational service components.<sup>21</sup>



The USSOCOM and the USAF support the integration of capability-based force packages and have influenced their resource investments to fuse and integrate their deployed components. The 2000 USSOCOM Posture Statement presents SOF as providing rapidly deployable and flexible joint task forces for both war and peacetime activities.<sup>22</sup> The Air Force developed the Expeditionary Aerospace Force (EAF) to make itself more flexible<sup>23</sup> and is evolving its 10 Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) packages to become equally capable.<sup>24</sup> USSOCOM advertises that when special operations forces (SOF) are supporting a JFC they are directed toward exactly the same ends as the operations of conventional forces.<sup>25</sup> And, the Air Force's capabilities will operate as part of joint, interagency, and coalition team and will offer order-of magnitude increases in offensive capability to expand the nations strategic options.<sup>26</sup> Each of these components is moving towards the strategic intent of a capabilities based military and has been improving component-to-component linkages. The SOLE, as a part of that linkage, reflects the investment by USSOCOM to weld the seams between the special operations and air component in the theater campaign.

#### **COMMAND AND CONTROL IN JOINT ORGANIZATIONS**

If joint organizations like the SOLE are to be effective in future battlespace, certain theoretical command and control postulations must be understood and considered. Designs of future command and control organizations must allow the units freedom of action, control, and direction to ensure deconfliction and to ensure economy of force. The units must also be able to respond in various physical environments and have the flexibility to command varied amounts of discreet entities in the battle space.

#### **BALANCE WITHIN JOINT ORGANIZATIONS**

Present day forces are linked for effective joint command and control operations in two ways. The first piece of the joint warfighting force is the ad hoc or part-time joint force command and control headquarters lead by the joint force commander. The second piece is the subordinate service or functional components; linked by a combination of ad hoc and permanent liaisons, procedural controls, automated data processing systems and specialized arrangements to ensure deconfliction and synchronization. It takes an effective overarching joint force headquarters to orchestrate interaction among components to achieve unity of effort. Together the joint force headquarters and the linked components are optimized and effectively prosecute the campaign objectives. The SOLE is a part of that linkage.

It is useful to use the principles cohesion and diversity to help understand the complexity of linking and balancing command and control in joint warfighting. Achieving synergistic effectiveness in joint warfighting, creates a tension or conflict between cohesion and diversity.

Preserving the cohesion of single-service or single-function components amid the diversity of ideas generated by a joint arrangement is the art of joint command and control. It is best implemented by well-trained, professional integrators. Components do most of their training within service or functional boundaries. When they arrive at the fight, they are comfortable with their service's single-function processes, procedures and systems for command and control. When components join a joint force headquarters structure, they must compromise some of their service procedures or some of their cohesiveness in order to meld with the other components in the joint force. Students of war almost universally state that joint arrangements which disrupt unit (or component) cohesion negate their benefits by reducing morale and efficiency.<sup>27</sup>

In contrast to the concept of cohesion is the concept of diversity. The concept of diversity states that competition of ideas leads to more creative and, ultimately, more stable strategy development. The idea of diversity allows differing views and discourse among components to bubble up to the Joint Force Headquarters resulting in the best plan of action. Diversity prevents the condition of groupthink.<sup>28</sup>

In warfighting, cohesion loses relevancy moving from unit level to joint staff level. Conversely, diversity loses relevancy descending from joint staff to unit level.

JFCs dwell in the middle where cohesion and diversity meet. A joint force commander can choose between two styles of command with regard to the principles [diversity and cohesion]: a coordinator who rationalizes the possibility of competing plans of combatant commanders, or an orchestrator who uses a staff to develop an operational plan and then issues unambiguous orders.<sup>29</sup>

Joint force headquarters must cultivate staff-to-staff relationships to be able to balance and link the strengths of the cohesive service or functional components without losing diversity of thought cherished by the higher levels within joint organizations. Personnel in organizations like the SOLE, dedicated to linking one component to another, must understand the tension between cohesion and diversity and be able to balance the demands of cohesion and diversity to be effective. These are fairly rigorous demands that imply the need for a professional staff.

## BOUNDARIES OF COMMAND AND CONTROL

Regulating and controlling assets and events while allowing freedom of action within the air and special operations environment is very complex. That complexity can be seen in the three perspectives of command and control envisioned by Colonel (Ret) John K. Boyd, Dr Joel S. Lawson, and General Paul F. Gorman.

The model of command and control envisioned by Boyd presents command and control as a four-step process of observation, orientation, decision, and action (O-O-D-A) (see Figure

4).<sup>30</sup> Boyd sees each of the steps as part of a decision cycle; the idea being that success in battle often depends on which commander can complete the loop faster. If you can get inside the opponent's decision cycle you have the advantage, and eventually the adversary's command and control system collapses.<sup>31</sup>

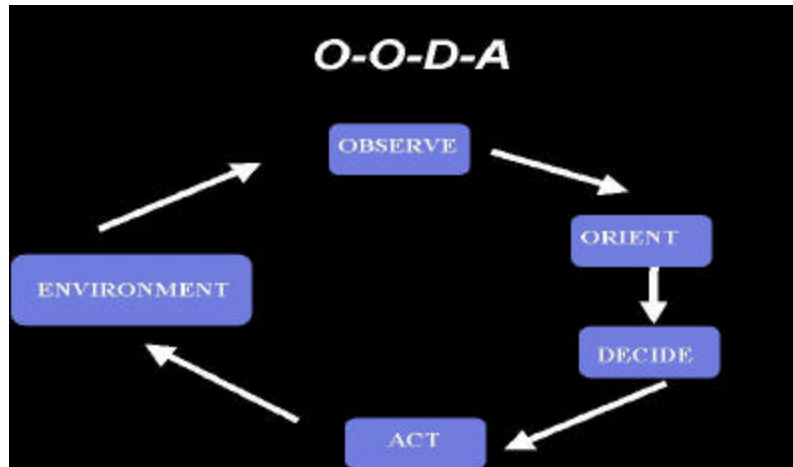


FIGURE 4. O-O-D-A LOOP

What the O-O-D-A model contributes to command and control theory stems from its grounding in the maneuver school of warfare theory (according to this theory, one must concentrate forces at vulnerable points as opposed to engaging in attrition techniques). Boyd's model supports the need to preserve freedom of action for maneuver units. Boyd's focus is on the individual commanders' thought processes. It is a leadership and monitoring model.<sup>32</sup> Boyd's O-O-D-A concept illustrates why one needs to operate in relative autonomy across a joint operational area. This approach is consistent with the decentralized employment concepts of special operations and air warfare theory. It is leadership-based execution heavily weighted with procedural controls (mission type orders) with less emphasis on positive control methods.<sup>33</sup>

A second model, created by Lawson, describes a system of greater or more positive command and control (see Figure 5).<sup>34</sup> Due to speed, high-density operations and limited maneuver room associated with air operations, and the potential controversial strategic impact associated with conventional air and special operations actions, there is a need for more positive methods of control at the joint force level. Lawson's model illustrates a more complex relationship of various levels of command; directing and controlling many disparate and inherently different components to conduct different operations while being part of an ever-larger system; a system of systems. Lawson asserts that various components of a command and control system must be self-contained to perform definable and separate functions. In his

model, one component or function can be changed or removed without affecting the others.<sup>35</sup> Lawson's model considers the complexity of the organizational environment, the interaction of component subparts and the importance of fused or synergistic interaction.

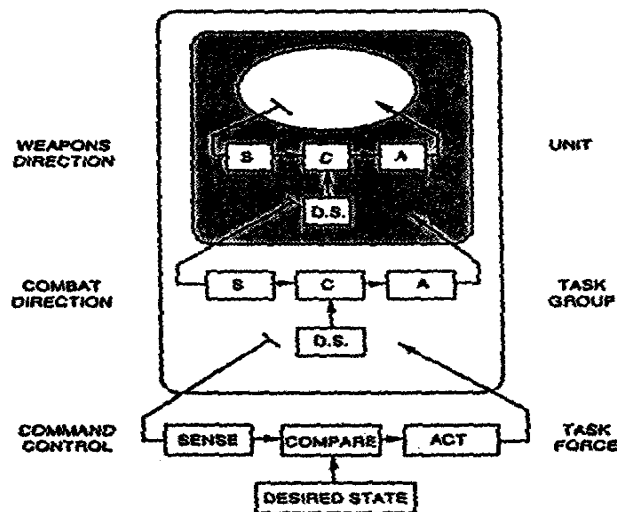


FIGURE 5. LAWSON'S MODEL SHOWING THREE LEVELS OF COMPLEXITY

Boyd's hands-off model and Lawson's hands-on model illustrate the tension between a laissez-faire approach and a controlled, systematic approach to command and control. They also illustrate the complexity of command and control in the context of the internal and external environment of warfighting.

Another view of the complexity of command and control considers the physical environment (air, ground, maritime) and the amount of stuff (units of action) one is commanding and controlling. General Paul F. Gorman proposes that the amount of disparate entities and the varied physical environments require commanders to organize for maximum command and control flexibility and agility. One must consider the amount of discreet units of action to be commanded and controlled and the physical environment of the battle space. In a major war environment, a typical three-star maritime commander could expect to command from 10 to 100 discreet entities (ships, aircraft, etc.). An equivalent air forces commander could expect to command from 100 to 1000 aircraft and associated ground entities. The equivalent land

component commander could expect to command from 100 to 10,000 entities. The exponential increase in units of action for each of the component commanders require a different view of how to employ command and control process and systems. Additionally, the physical environments of air, sea (surface/sub surface), space and land offer different relative transparencies for electronics, optical acoustic and communication.<sup>36</sup>

Gorman's observations suggest that one command and control organization does not fit all. The amount of entities to be commanded and the physical operating environment are critical considerations for designing command and control organizations and relationships. Boyd indicates organizations must allow hands-off maneuver and freedom of action. People and process are the hallmarks of effectiveness. Lawson provides an appreciation for how complex the organizational environment can be and the importance of component subparts and suggests a stronger element of control. Both Lawson and Boyd view command as a process, one that is repeated over and over in recognizable ways.<sup>37</sup> Adding specific hardware and software and sensors to see the battlefield better and help make decisions faster does not take away from the universality of the process. Together these ideas suggest relative complexity and imply a need for a professional cadre to balance command and control hegemony with unit of action autonomy.

Whatever model one ascribes to, the degree of effectiveness seems to depend on staff experience, theater familiarity and established working relationships. JFC Commanders must have the staffs, liaisons and professional training to be able to balance the strengths of the service or functional components without losing diversity of thought.<sup>38</sup> A liaison element charged with integrating various warfighting components must have an understanding of theoretical command and control boundaries and be able to balance and link competing forces.

## **HOW PERMANENT INTEGRATING ORGANIZATIONS CAN FACILITATE COMMAND AND CONTROL**

A permanent integrating organization can reduce the complexity of commanding and controlling joint operations—thus allowing improved responsiveness and effectiveness. Evidence of this can be seen in the following four examples: a standing joint force headquarters (SJFHQ), a battlefield coordination detachment, and two current permanent SOLE efforts. The processes, people, and skill sets needed to enable a SJFHQ to support a JFC or enable the liaison entities, the BCD and the permanent SOLEs, to support synchronization are similar in many respects, but focus at different levels of warfighting. Each is an attempt to better fuse lateral and hierarchical/vertical staff interaction. Each example offers critical points to consider when deciding on the degree and type of permanency needed for a given integrating organization.

## THE SJFHQ

The SJFHQ provides a standing, joint, command and control capability specifically organized to increase the options of the Regional Component Commander (RCC) to deter crisis. Should deterrence fail, it provides a means to quickly establish a core joint task force headquarters capable of conducting planning and execution.

### Background

In the early 1990's, United States Atlantic Command (USACOM), renamed USJFCOM, conducted the Unified Endeavor exercise series, designed to train ad hoc Joint Task Force (JTF) staffs. The ad hoc JTF was sourced from a service three star headquarters: a Numbered Air Force, an Army Corps, a Marine Expeditionary Force or a Naval Fleet with that organization's commander serving as the ad hoc JFC. Consequently, the preponderance of the ad hoc staff was sourced from the same three-star headquarters as the JFC and was the primary training audience. The participating service or functional components, subordinate to the JTF headquarters, were the secondary training audience. The newly formed ad hoc JTF staff brought with it characteristics of the preponderant sourcing service. A JTF formed from the 18<sup>th</sup> Airborne Corps would, initially, act like an Army staff despite having some augmentees from other services

At the outset of an exercise, service characteristics and biases were evident. Joint synchronization within and among staffs matured as the exercise progressed. Just when there seemed to be some joint synergy present among component level and JTF level participants, the exercise would end. Great effort was expended, as the exercise unfolded, to overcome service habits and adopt joint processes.<sup>39</sup> Lacquement in his article, *Welding the Joint Seams*, summed up jointness with ad hoc staffs as follows:

This ad hoc arrangement creates disparities in experience, standard operating procedures, and staff cohesion. The time-sensitive nature of execution places enormous demands on ad hoc organizations. Frequently, the operations retain the definition and flavor of the service that provided the JTF commander, who in turn relies on the staff with which he is already familiar. Lack of joint team training and cohesion is most relevant in the initial phases of operations. In situations with little or no warning, this lack of experience and training creates a major risk to mission accomplishment.<sup>40</sup>

In practice, Gen Charles E. Wilhelm (Ret), working for Joint Forces Command as a senior officer mentor for JTF commander trainees, observed that --

[t]he most frequently voiced criticism of joint task force operations is their ad hoc nature. Headquarters are drawn together on the dawn of a crisis. These people have not worked together closely before. They bring a well-developed skill set, but not as a team because they have not worked together enough. In an attempt

to address this criticism.....the Joint Forces Command has put together the concept of a joint task force headquarters.<sup>41</sup>

The Unified Endeavor exercise series repeatedly pointed to the shortfalls of “part-time” Joint Task Force (JTF) staffs and led to the concept of permanent joint entities to enhance joint warfighting command and control. A summary of the shortfalls observed over the last 10 years follows:

- Ad hoc JTF staffs seeded from service warfighting staffs exhibited prolonged service-like operating characteristics, were slow to assimilate other service augmentees and slow to implement joint processes
- Execution of joint processes (targeting, ISR joint logistics) and command and control system complexity influenced after action evaluations to suggest the need for experts or full-time professionals to quickly achieve staff effectiveness
- Relationships between the ad hoc JTF Staff, the RCC staff and other theater agencies were slow to mature: suggesting full time JTF members were needed for continuity
- Personnel designated as part time JTF staff deployers could not maintain the JTF staff training regimen due to the demands of their ‘day job’<sup>42</sup>

Many after-action reports highlighted the same observations and led to the development of the standing joint force headquarters.

### **The Standing Joint Force Headquarters (SJFHQ)**

The SJFHQ is intended to be a full-time joint and cross-functionally organized command and control element within the RCC staff that has a daily focus on warfighting. It is composed of permanent joint personnel, collaboratively planning, preparing, and training with other staff elements and designated component planning cells for specified contingencies within the area of operation (AOR). The SJFHQ provides each regional combatant commander with a trained and equipped standing, joint command and control capability specifically organized to increase the RCC’s options to deter crisis. Should deterrence fail, it provides a means to quickly establish a core JTF capable of conducting planning and execution. The SJFHQ provides pre-crisis situational understanding of potential crisis areas, use of in-place collaboration tools, and increased capability to plan and integrate operations. When implemented, it will be a standing element that focuses on a combatant commander’s operational trouble spots. The SJFHQ will provide the combatant commander an increased range of options for crisis response and present preemptive and follow-on options to a unified combatant commander. The knowledge centric, cross-functional organization takes advantage of knowledge and information flow.<sup>43</sup>

## SJFHQ Function

The SJFHQ has two general roles: First, it is part of the combatant commander's staff and therefore develops habitual staff relationships between the combatant commander's headquarters and the key enabling agencies outside the headquarters. Second, the SJFHQ has the expertise and communications resources to change into a standing joint force command headquarters (forward, rear or both) or augment a component headquarters that has been designated as a joint force headquarters. In its first role, the SJFHQ develops standardized joint force procedures for operations within the combatant commander's AOR, joint operational net assessments, contingency plans, and supporting deployment plans as tasked by the combatant commander. In its second role, as crisis develops, the SJFHQ will shift rapidly and seamlessly from planning to execution

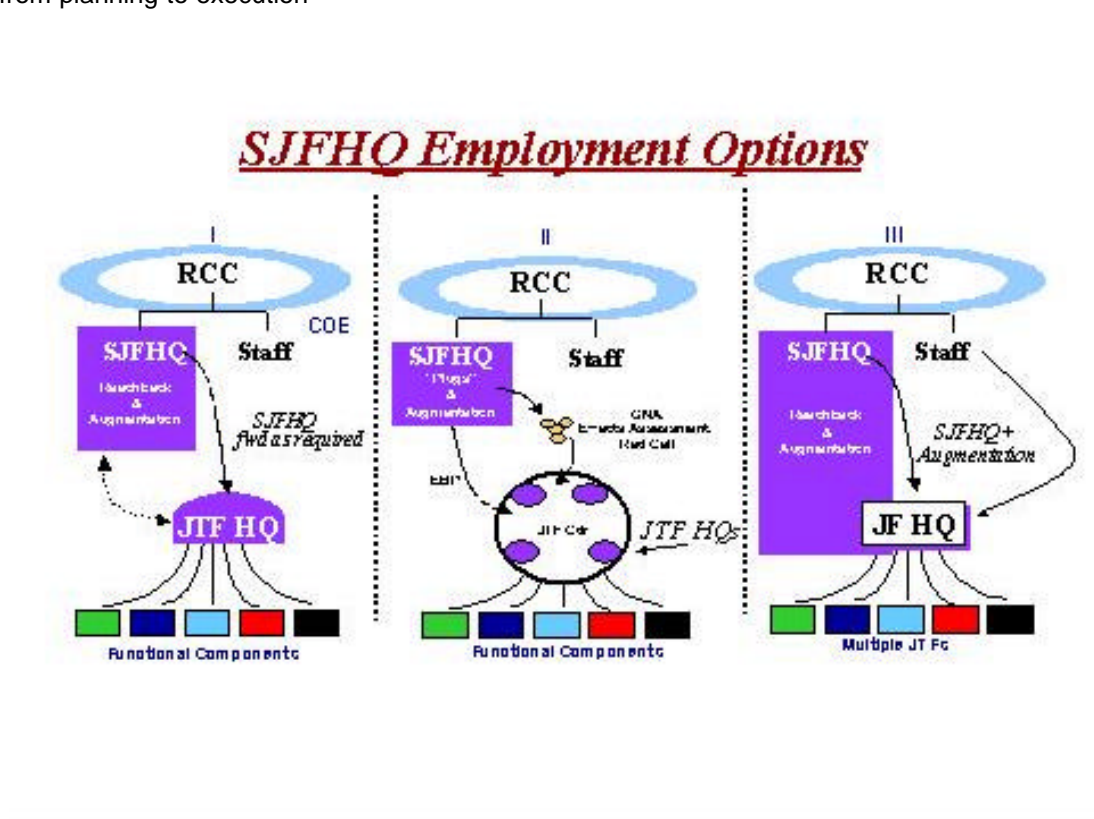


FIGURE 6. THREE EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS FOR STANDING JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS

Overall, the SJFHQ provides the detailed understanding of the area of operations and standardized procedures and systems and is immediately responsive to the geographical combatant commander for crisis response planning and execution.<sup>44</sup> These two roles offer three employment options (see Figure 6)<sup>45</sup> during a crisis response:



The RCC selects the best option based upon the scope of the contingency, the scale of its potential response forces, and the estimated duration of operations. The RCC may use the SJFHQ Commander or may assign another senior flag officer as JTF commander and augment the SJFHQ to serve as the RCC's forward operational JTF command element. In a second option, the SJFHQ provides specific plugs and augmentees to a Service Component staff to enable it to conduct and support joint operations. In this option, the SJFHQ facilitates the transition of the Service-oriented headquarters from peacetime to a JTF headquarters by providing the continuity in planning and operations required to support a rapid, fully integrated response to the developing situation. In the third option, the SJFHQ is retained at the RCC headquarters. In this case the RCC becomes the warfighting headquarters, executing operations through subordinate JTF or Service Components.<sup>46</sup>

### **Assessment.**

The SJFHQ provides at least five characteristics necessary for strengthening joint operations. A Standing Joint Force Headquarters –

- Provides a high performance permanent team, knowledgeable of the strategic and operational environment within the AOR and the C2 systems and equipment.
- Fosters habitual relationships with combatant commander staffs, subordinate functional and service component commanders, and interagency players.
- Understands pre-crisis knowledge, combatant commander guidance and plans for all aspects and phases of a campaign.
- Has the latest information technologies, collaborative analysis and decision-making tools to enable rapid decision-making.
- Can transform itself from a day to day staff mode into a plug and play JTF deployable core headquarters for a specific campaign or operation.<sup>47</sup>

The characteristics above were assessed by the Millennium Challenge '02 Experiment (MC02). Through interviews and after action surveys USJFCOM was able to provide lessons learned. The data gathered to support this portion of the MC02 analysis effort was predominantly qualitative. Three primary groups of participants provided data that addressed the value added by the SJFHQ, its function, its organization, and its composition. The survey groups were experiment participants, and included members of the JTF headquarters including the imbedded SJFHQ, regional component commander headquarters staffs, and control cell participants. The JTF level and component level participants regarded the SJFHQ personnel as value-added to the standup and effectiveness of a JTF. The specific facts extracted from the surveys resulted in the following findings:

- The SJFHQ reduced the ad hoc characteristics of standing up a Joint Task Force
- The SJFHQ helped surmount the JTF stand-up learning curve

- The SJFHQ provided continuity in planning and operations from pre-crisis through execution
- The Component players saw value-added to a SJFHQ<sup>48</sup>

These findings indicate that a joint command and control structure is certainly strengthened by the presence of a permanent standing staff when compared to the ad hoc staff alternative.

#### BATTLEFIELD COORDINATION DETACHMENT

The BCD is similar to the SJFHQ in that they both leverage permanent personnel to strengthen joint interaction. They differ in that the BCD focuses on organizations one level down; component-to-component interaction. Because the BCD is a liaison organization, not a command organization, its effectiveness is based on building consensus, which is highly dependent on trust and credibility.<sup>49</sup> The BCD synchronizes air operations with ground operations through the coordination of air support and the exchange of operational and intelligence information

#### Background

The Battlefield Coordination Detachment (BCD) has existed as an echelons-above-corps organization since the Gulf War. The BCD has been established in the conventional air component's or JFACC's air operations center and has represented the Army Forces Commander (ARFOR) in many operations to include Desert Storm, Bosnia, Kosovo and Operation Enduring Freedom. The BCD functioned as a permanent liaison element in many exercises and experiments, including the Unified Endeavor series, the Army's Corps Warfighter series, and Millennium Challenge 02. In both the operational and exercise environment, the BCD has proven itself a key element for melding the seam between the conventional air and ground components. Its longtime permanent status has ensured a trained and equipped BCD staff able to respond quickly as situations develop requiring a joint force to conduct integrated air and ground operations.

#### Defining the BCD

The BCD, as the senior Army or land component liaison to the air component, ensures the senior Army or land component commander's decisions are understood by the air component commander and conversely the air component commander's intentions are understood by the senior Army or land component commander. The BCD is not a decision maker for the senior Army or land component commander. The organization is commanded by a Colonel with experience as an operational brigade commander.<sup>50</sup>

BCD functions (see FIGURE 7)<sup>51</sup> include processing the senior Army or land component commander requests for air support, monitoring and interpreting the land battle for the AOC and providing the necessary interface for exchange of current intelligence and operational data to include targeting synchronization.<sup>52</sup>

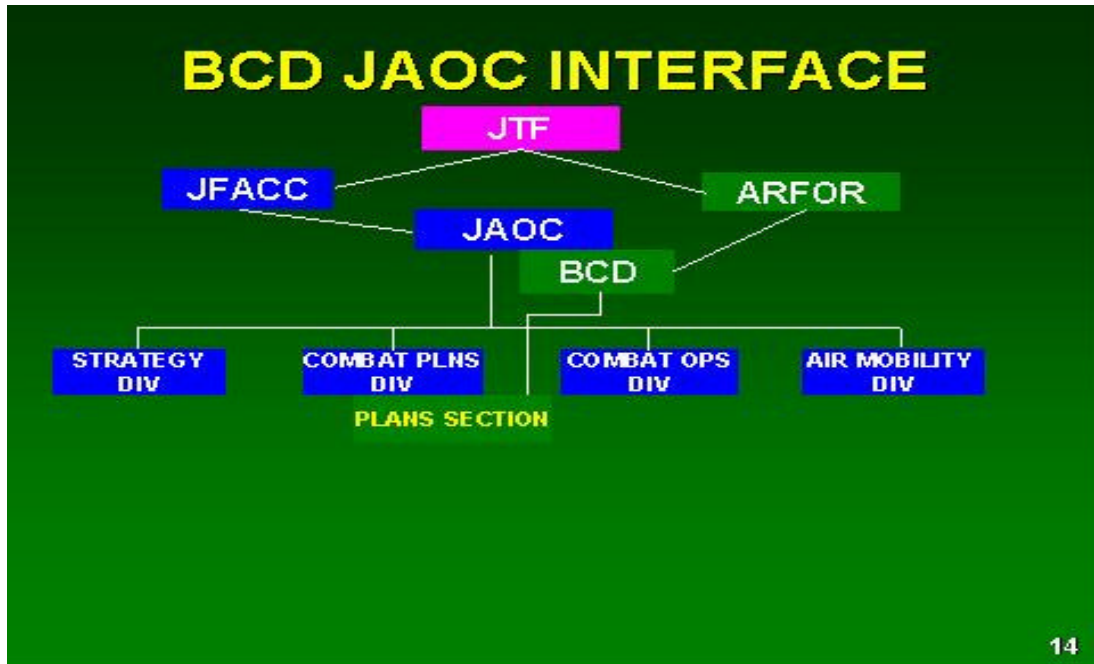


FIGURE 7. BCD IN THE AIR COMPONENT'S AIR OPERATIONS CENTER

Four permanent BCDs, three active detachments and one reserve detachment, are either theater forward-based or theater aligned. One of the active duty detachments is assigned to the 18<sup>th</sup> Airborne Corps and is aligned to the USCENTCOM theater of operations. The two forward based active duty BCDs are assigned to USEUCOM and Korea. The permanent reserve component BCD is CONUS-based and aligned with USPACOM. Additionally, there is a part-time BCD that is part of the US Army 3<sup>d</sup> Corps and is staffed with designated augmentees when required.<sup>53</sup>

#### BCD function

The BCD success as a permanent liaison organization has been the model for designing liaison organizations. The SOLE, Naval Component Liaison Element (NALE) or Marine Liaison Officer (MARLO) have evolved their organizational and functional designs based on the BCD's successes.

BCD success is linked to four factors. First, the Army invests and supports a permanent team, knowledgeable of the operational environment, the theater and the necessary C2 systems and equipment. Second, the Colonel command billet ensures continuity for accessing, training, exercising and employing their specialized military skills. Third, the element's frequency of attendance at exercises and experiments fosters habitual relationships with the air component staffs and other functional and service component staffs. Fourth, because it has at its fingertips technologies, trained personnel and proven working relationships, it can respond quickly as a plug-and-play deployable entity for a specific campaign or operation.<sup>54</sup>

The BCD has proven to be a powerful force in a joint warfighting environment. During the Kosovo conflict, the BCD, or Battlefield Coordination Element (BCE) as it was called at that time, stepped in to fill a void normally filled by the ARFOR. The unit most likely to have been named ARFOR was TF Hawk. However, early in the conflict TF Hawk had not yet deployed to the area of operations. TF Hawk-Albania was a V Corps force consisting of a headquarters element, Army attack helicopters, a multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) battalion and maneuver protection forces. The BCE was in place in the Combined AOC and was prepared to provide its doctrinal mission of air-ground coordination. As the air war progressed, members of the BCE began developing tracking and nominating targets at the request of the air component to help find and destroy enemy ground forces. Doctrinally, these functions would have been conducted by the ARFOR (TF Hawk). The BCE's role was restricted to only coordinating between the ARFOR and the air component. However, since the ARFOR was not yet operational, the BCE had the capability and was able to assist. It was the early ability of the trained and experienced BCE that enabled the air component to have improved ground targeting situational awareness until TF Hawk was in-place.<sup>55</sup>

While this is not a lesson in correct BCD doctrine or tradecraft, it illustrates the scope of capability and skill sets the Army has developed by investing in the permanent BCD. The well-trained, well-led permanent BCD was a powerful joint linkage--able to emulate the relevant functions of the ARFOR to the air component. In 1995 the Air Land Sea Application Center, based on the successes of the BCD/BCE, recommended special operations forces develop a similar liaison capability. It suggested the liaison team be joint, and patterned in function similar to the BCD.<sup>56</sup> Early efforts to professionalize the SOLE have followed the lead of the BCD.

#### CURRENT PERMANENT SOLE EFFORTS

As stated at the outset of this paper, there are permanent SOLE organizations existing now. USSOCOM, through the Air Force Special Operations Command established a 15-man permanent US-based SOLE core team aligned to the geographic theaters of operation. Also,

there has existed a 4-man theater-based permanent SOLE (Joint Special Operations Liaison Element-JSOLE) in the Korean theater of Operations. These two organizations will illustrate the effects of making the SOLE permanent. Certainly, both of these entities have improved special operations liaison effectiveness over the purely ad hoc arrangements of the past.

### **US-based SOLE**

Major General Richard Comer has stated in his discussion of Operation Enduring Freedom that--

[e]stablishing one team, one element of liaison to ensure the [special operations] team is actively engaged in the air campaign was vital. Operation Enduring Freedom offered us the chance to prove the concept. Instead of pulling folks from across the command, we had a ready team certified, trained and experienced in serving as a liaison to the conventional force.<sup>57</sup>

The deployable US-based permanent SOLE is made up of three flights, each with a theater specific focus. All the flights are trained and certified in AOC operations and attend courses in conventional air operations command and control as well as special operations command and control. The permanent team interacts with theater conventional AOC personnel. This permanent US-based core SOLE team provides personnel prepared to function on the first day of conflict. The permanent members must be augmented by theater and US-based ad hoc personnel to be a fully functional SOLE package. The permanent core concept, as an economy of force idea, offers an efficient way to swing from one theater to another providing a small core of full-time expertise. However, it does not offer the depth of theater experience needed to develop the full confidence of the theater special operations component commander and the air component commander. A core team from the US is at some disadvantage when establishing the local theater formal and informal command and senior staff communication channels needed to have an interdependent relationship between the special operations component and the air component.<sup>58</sup>

### **Korea-based JSOLE**

Contrasted to the US-based core SOLE is the regional- or theater-based arrangement characteristic of the JSOLE. The JSOLE is the permanent SOLE (Joint Special Operations Liaison Element-JSOLE) in the Korean theater of Operations. The JSOLE provides the advice, coordination, and liaison between the combined (Korean-US) forces air component commander in the air operation center and the Combined Special Operations Component Commander during times of crisis on the Korean Peninsula, contingencies, and combined military planning and exercising. It consists of 4 permanent core personnel functioning full-time to coordinate, integrate, and deconflict all special operations air and surface activities. The JSOLE provides

situational awareness of special operations units in the joint operating area and visibility of special operations missions in the CFACC's air tasking order and airspace control order.<sup>59</sup> The JSOLE works for the Combined Special Operations Component Commander.

Using the joint/combined targeting process as a backdrop, there are three areas where the permanent JSOLE contributes to unity of effort. First, the JSOLE has become a key participant in the theater deliberate planning function. It is a critical part of the combined deliberate-target planning process which functions as a unifying element between US and Korean military leadership. The JSOLE's permanent liaison presence is a necessary part of building trust and confidence between the US special operations component, the US air component and their Korean counterparts.

Second, the mechanics of the targeting process requires the JSOLE staff to liaise between combined special operations staffs and combined air component staffs. The full-time strategy development, asset apportionment, and resulting air tasking order changes serves to solidify Korean and US military to military interaction. Permanent presence by the JSOLE ensures the air component understands special operations' capability to successfully penetrate denied and hostile airspace. Rather than be a hindrance to conventional operations, special operations capability is routinely brought to the forefront of planning by the JSOLE. A part-time or ad hoc JSOLE could not build the trust and credibility nor accumulate the detailed knowledge necessary to be an effective joint or combined player.<sup>60</sup>

Third, a lateral and hierarchical and vertical link has evolved because of the JSOLE's continuous presence. The link is between the JSOLE and the theater-based special operations tactical component's headquarters. This relationship blends the distinctions between strategic-operational- and tactical-level planning and is an efficient use of manpower. When a target changes at the theater-strategic or operational level, the changes are easily assimilated by the tactical headquarters because the JSOLE staff and the special operations tactical headquarters staff train and work together on a regular basis. The JSOLE fosters communication and trust between the players at the operational and tactical levels. It is an efficient and effective joint/combined integrator.<sup>61</sup> The track record of the JSOLE, which is very similar to that of the regional BCD, embodies what is necessary for permanent regional liaison elements. The JSOLE exemplifies the right concept; it's just too small.

## COMMONALITIES

### **Overarching characteristics of the SJFHQ, the BCD and the permanent SOLEs**

The SJFHQ, the BCDs and the SOLEs all share some common characteristics critical to a core permanent entity. First, each are organized in peacetime like they will fight. Unit

personnel train together, exercise together, and then employ as a unit. The personnel behave like traditional staff officers in a day-to-day staff role, then transform to a warfighting staff when a contingency starts. They deploy. The entire organization employs as part of the JFC's warfighting command and control hierarchy. Solidarity in training, exercising, and employing is critical to their responsiveness and ability to quickly and effectively function in the JFC's command and control structure.

Second, the organizations' permanence mitigates the distinctions and friction between the levels of war and maximizes cross component synergy. By virtue of their permanence, the people in these organizations develop coordination pathways, personal relationships and command and control systems expertise that transcends the traditional levels of warfighting. This experience allows them to see the warfighting organizational dynamics and its influence on a campaign from many angles; just as an experienced teacher can visualize and explain a concept from many points of view.

Third, with very little exception, when they deploy, their organizations are augmented by ad hoc personnel. Therefore, these organizations rely on and must be prepared to accept augmentation to fulfill the full range of contingency requirements. Organizations needing augmentation support must have the capability to source, orient, teach and sustain the temporary help. Therefore, the level of expertise for permanent members of the SJFHQ, BCD or permanent SOLE must be above basic competence, preferably instructors or teachers in their functional areas.

### **Common Policy Relationships**

From a policy standpoint the examples support the goal of strengthening joint operations. The SJFHQ is an attempt to have the capability to rapidly integrate joint and combined operations. The BCD permanence and cohesion demonstrates the ability to bring joint C2 structure down to the component by bridging conventional air and ground activity. The evolution of the SOLE from ad hoc status to the 15-man US-based permanent core and a 4-man theater-based SOLE in Korea demonstrates the USSOCOM's intent to ensure special operations forces are directed towards the same ends when working as a supported or supporting entity in a regional combatant commander's theater.

The way joint integration is being achieved is through both joint and service methods. The SJFHQ concept was achieved through a joint initiative. The BCD is a very successful service effort. The SOLE effort was born out of necessity for two functional relationships (air and special operations) to integrate more quickly and efficiently and has service and joint backing. Strengthening joint integration will continue to be a joint and service or functional component bill to pay. Policy oversight must continue to control the many options.

## **Diverse Theory Relationships**

Each of the examples cited emphasizes different aspects of diverse theory while adhering to the notion of building permanent and professional organizations. The SJFHQ populates its organization with joint officers explicitly to gain diversity in thought and action. The future permanent SJFHQ member will bring experiences from a diverse background, be able to respond to multiple and complex situations and quickly build a remote joint force headquarters. The SJFHQ personnel will understand the strategic and operational environment, know the interagency players, have pre-crisis knowledge and be proficient on the joint decision-making tools.

In selecting and growing this joint generalist, some of the service expertise that originally highlighted this person as a good candidate may atrophy. One tends to lose service/functional expertise the longer one is part of a permanent joint staff. Those tasks requiring up-to-date and specific functional or service expertise will take second place for the greater joint good. This fact, along with reluctance by services to provide bodies for more joint positions, creates potential barriers to implementation. The multi-role mission of the SJFHQ, with its three possible employment options, reflects an attempt to offer the broadest and most comprehensive role for its personnel in order to get both joint and service support.

The permanent BCDs are the best example of leveraging a permanent organization. It has the ability to resource, train and equip personnel, and to deal with the complexity of commanding and controlling. The BCD has influence at the operational and tactical levels of war and is critical to linking the air and ground environments. By virtue of its permanent presence and expertise, it's able to meld the distinctions between the levels of war, thereby providing a fused operational picture of ground operations to the air component.

In contrast to the SJFHQ, the unique value of the BCD is that it's a single service organization with a very narrow focus. Service readiness training affords it the ability to stay up to date with specific functional expertise necessary to accurately portray the ground commander's intent and scheme of maneuver. Yet, it's joint-like in its functional role as an integrator within the air operations center. The BCD design and capability will support future battlefield configurations as the amount of discreet units of action increases and the amount of intermediate headquarters decreases. Just like the SJFHQ, resources control the size and scope of regionally-based BCDs

From a theory perspective the JSOLE and US-based permanent SOLE organizations are meeting the intent of a joint command and control organization. Their permanence and resulting universality of their training regimen has enhanced these organizations' ability to deal with the complexity of command and control. The theater-based status of the JSOLE, affords it the



opportunity to flatten the warfighting organizational structure and leverage expertise from the special operations tactical component headquarters. This relationship blends the distinctions between strategic, operational and tactical level planning and is an efficient use of manpower. Finally, the inherent joint make-up of the US-based SOLE and JSOLE balances the strengths of their service or functional components without losing diversity of thought necessary for joint interaction. Again, as with the SJFHQ and the regionally-based BCDs, the size and scope of permanent SOLEs is constrained by resources and manpower.

### **THREE WAYS TO GO FROM HERE**

The characteristics basic to any permanent integrating command and control organization are that it be organized to accommodate the hands-on aspect of control and the hands-off aspect of command. A professional and permanent staff must be

- Organized in peacetime like they will fight
- Organized to mitigate distinction and friction between the levels of war and maximize cross component synergy.
- Organized to accept augmentation.

The options below are organizationally useful and feasible but offer a different emphasis on location and different manpower costs.

#### **OPTION ONE: EXPAND THE SIZE OF THE CONUS-BASED SOLE TO HAVE THE CORE CAPABILITY TO RESPOND TO THE KEY THEATERS**

Option one is to expand the US-based SOLE. By doing so, the organization could provide trained and equipped SOLE personnel to the theater JFACC's. This core would be augmented to round out the SOLE manpower requirement. Task-organized, theater-aligned, SOLE flights would deploy as the core of the SOLE requirement.

The most advantageous aspect of the expanded CONUS-based SOLE is its ability to train and equip its permanent staff. This builds a strong, professional team experienced in process and systems able to readily accept and train augmentees. Permanent personnel can hone their skills at the various service command and control schoolhouses and participate in CONUS-based experiments and exercises. The US-based SOLE is currently part of an Air Force major command, and can take full advantage of the Air Force's position as lead service for the core automated data processing systems within the JFACC. A centralized CONUS-based permanent SOLE will quickly assimilate any changes that occur in process, procedure or configuration.

The greatest disadvantage of the CONUS-based SOLE is its separation from the theaters of operation. The element's distance from the theater, resulting in separation from theater

specific staffs (especially air and special operations staffs), from theater operating methods and from theater coalition partners creates problems. First, the SOLE needs a close relationship with theater specific staffs: the special operations component and the air component. Where these component headquarters are located during peacetime (no ongoing exercises or contingencies etc.) has bearing on the amount of interface and the resulting trust and confidence that is developed. For the USCENTCOM theater, the air component, 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force and the special operations component, Special Operations Command, Central Command (SOCCENT), are located in the CONUS. Therefore, it would be expected that the CONUS-based SOLE would have sufficient interface to establish strong relationships. The United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) theater air component is 12<sup>th</sup> Air Force and is based in CONUS. However the special operations component is on the island Puerto Rico. For USPACOM to include the Korean Peninsula and USEUCOM their air components and special operations components reside in the theater. The degree to which a CONUS-based SOLE can have regular interface with the various theater air and special operations staffs is a function of location.

Second, being familiar with the personalities and local procedures is key to understanding theater-operating methods. The speed that a theater can move from a peacetime mode to a warfighting configuration is directly related to the amount of routine interaction that has taken place among components and the trust that has evolved during peacetime. A CONUS-based SOLE will be at a disadvantage when it comes to day-to-day theater operating methods.

Third, using the same argument, there will be difficulty for a CONUS-based SOLE to bond with theater coalition air and special operations counterparts. A SOLE Director coming from the United States trying to interface with a Korean air component commander certainly would have less credibility than a SOLE Director that lived and worked in the theater full-time.

The larger US-based SOLE has a fair opportunity to take advantage of cross-echelon synergy to mitigate the distinctions between the levels of war and improve staff effectiveness. For example, to be able to exchange personnel with like specialties between the SOLE and the tactical component headquarters opens up pathways of understanding and blurs distinctions between operational and tactical level issues. Again, for CONUS-based component organizations that would become the special operations tactical component headquarters for a contingency (16<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Wing, 160<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment, CONUS based Special Forces and CONUS SEALs) cross-echelon synergy is possible. However, for a CONUS-based SOLE to leverage the manpower and expertise from theater-based special operations component headquarters would be difficult.

Overall, the larger US-based SOLE is strong in its ability to train and equip for the generic warfighting scenario. It has moderate capability to integrate with the air component and special operations component headquarters depending on location. It can easily accept augmentees with the caveat of theater familiarity. This option is the economy-of-force option using the least personnel.

#### OPTION TWO: ESTABLISH REGIONAL THEATER-BASED SOLES

Option two expands on the concept of the Korean JSOLE and advocates adding available manpower to establish permanent SOLEs in key theaters of operation. Regional theater-based SOLEs would work for the special operations component commands in the theaters. This core would be augmented like the augmentation in option one to round out the SOLE manpower requirement for the theater.

The most advantageous aspect of a regional theater-based SOLE is its ability to build permanent bridges with the theater components. Being in the theater allows daily interface with theater specific staffs (especially air and special operations staffs), and theater coalition partners. Theater basing gives the SOLE the advantage of knowing important interests and operating methods. Theater basing makes indoctrination of augmentees efficient and effective. Clearly, having these advantages is critical to rapid transition to a warfighting posture.

Regional theater-based SOLEs would be postured for ongoing formal training with the air component. However, the regionally-based SOLE, when compared to larger US-based SOLE, does not have the flexibility to take advantage of the rich CONUS-based process and systems training and would not have the exposure to the very specialized experiment and exercises designed to train air component staffs.

The regional theater-based SOLEs have a better opportunity to take advantage of cross-echelon synergy to mitigate the distinctions between the levels of war and improve staff effectiveness. Three of the overseas theaters (USPACOM, USEUCOM, USCENTCOM) have, or will soon have, special operations tactical air component headquarters (JSOAC's) in the theater. Theater-based SOLEs, working day-to-day with permanent theater-based special operations tactical air component headquarters (JSOACs) build communication pathways that are carried over to warfighting relationships.

Additionally, there is a good possibility that theater-based SOLES could increase their synergy with JSOACs in the near future. Permanent theater-based JSOACs will be manned with the same military occupational specialties as required by a permanent SOLE. This creates the opportunity for the two permanent organizations to evolve into one hybrid SOLE-JSOAC organization. This hybrid organization could achieve day-to-day the synergy that, historically,

only existed when an ad hoc SOLE and an ad hoc JSOAC worked together in an exercise or contingency.

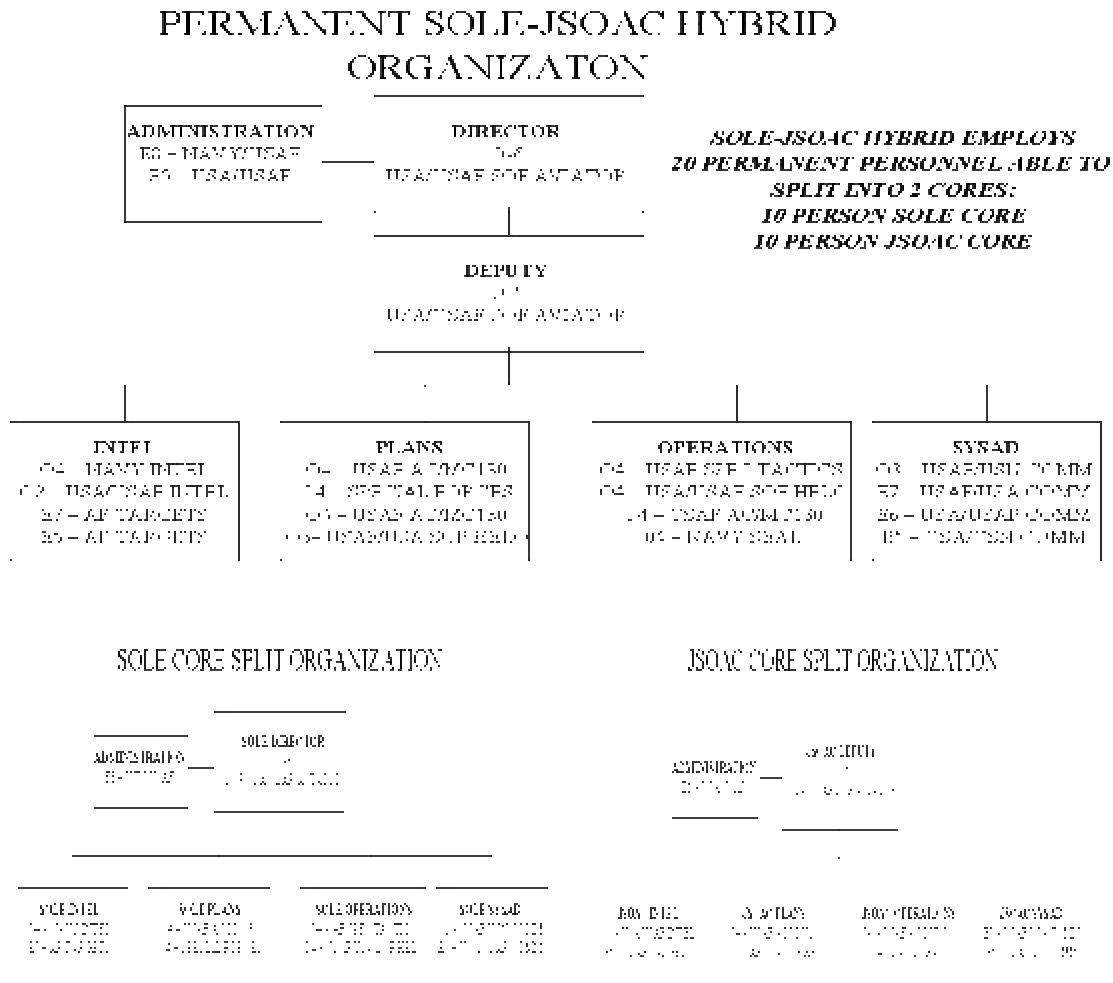


FIGURE 8. HYBRID SOLE-JSOAC ORGANIZATION SPLITS TO BECOME CORE OF SOLE AND CORE OF JSOAC

The SOLE-JSOAC permanent staff would work and train together everyday. Their daily functions would be focused on integration of the air component with the special operations component. During an exercise or contingency the organization would split into the liaison piece (SOLE Core) and the special operations air component piece (JSOAC Core) (see Figure 8). The liaison piece would form the core of the SOLE, accept augmentation and conduct standard SOLE duties. The special operations air component staff piece would form the core of the JSOAC, join with the headquarters elements of the tactical aviation organizations (Air Force special operations groups or elements of the Army's 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation

Regiment), and conduct standard JSOAC duties. This arrangement provides instant, built-in, cross-echelon synergy because the core staffs work and train with each other daily.

In a more general sense, this economy of force arrangement supports the three characteristics suggested earlier. First, it is organized for warfighting. Second, the professional staff is prepared to accept augmentees in both the SOLE and JSOAC and quickly fuse staff to staff relationships. Finally, its people are trained to work in both the SOLE and JSOAC. Their dual certification mitigates distinctions between the operational level tasks and the tactical level tasks; critical to rapid integration of joint and combined operations.

Even without the advent of a JSOAC-SOLE hybrid, a regional theater-based SOLE has a fair-to-good ability to train and equip for the generic warfighting scenario. It has outstanding opportunities to understand every detail of theater interactions. It has a very good capability to integrate with the air component and special operations component headquarters in its theater. It can easily accept augmentees, provide sufficient SOLE training and provide excellent theater familiarity. This option, when compared to option one requires an increased investment in personnel.

#### OPTION 3: COMBINE THE LARGER US-BASED SOLE WITH THE REGIONAL THEATER-BASED SOLE

Option three offers the advantages of the US-based SOLE, including its access to the best leading-edge training and experimenting. It also offers the best parts of the regional theater-based SOLE, including theater familiarity, credibility and the ability to develop the informal coordination pathways with theater-based subordinates crucial to vertical and horizontal integration of integration of joint operations. The relative balance of manpower investment in the CONUS-based SOLE versus selected-theater-based SOLEs would determine the tradeoffs between theater effectiveness and CONUS deployment flexibility. The manpower bill for this option, however, is prohibitive if both CONUS-based and theater-based staffing is maximized.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Recommend acting on option two. Establish permanent regional theater-based SOLEs in key theaters: USCENTCOM, USPACOM and USEUCOM. These SOLEs would provide sufficient opportunity for special operations and air component formal and continuation training. Theater-basing provides outstanding opportunity to build theater credibility with US and coalition component staffs and the commanders. And, theater-basing would ensure synergy with the permanent theater-based JSOACs being fielded by USSOCOM.

In a more general sense, this economy of force arrangement supports the three characteristics suggested earlier. First, it is organized for warfighting. Second, the professional staff is prepared to accept augmentees in both the SOLE and JSOAC and quickly fuse staff to staff relationships. Finally, its people are trained to work in both the SOLE and JSOAC. Their dual certification mitigates distinctions between the operational level tasks and the tactical level tasks; critical to rapid integration of joint and combined operations.

Theory teaches that command and control organizations must allow hands-off maneuver and freedom of action, yet at the same time deal with the complexity of multiple units of action, at different echelons, operating in different environments. Successful command and control in joint operations can depend on the effectiveness of the ties binding conventional air activity and special operations actions together. If command and control personnel and liaisons in wartime are to balance the strengths of their service or functional components without losing the diversity of thought necessary for joint interaction, they must be able to build in peacetime the relationships and the experience that will enable them to do so.

Making the SOLE permanent and placing them in key theaters of operation is a force structure change supported by lessons-learned from numerous iterations of ad hoc experiences. It is a concept consistent with command and control theory. It will cement effective support for joint warfighting. It will help achieve a flexible, capability-based force to meet future operational challenges a goal of our nation's strategy.



WORD COUNT= 10,345



## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>5</sup> U. S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, Joint Publication 1-02 (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 12 April 2002), 244.
- <sup>6</sup> Colonel (Ret) Brian Maher, "The SOLE," briefing slides with scripted commentary, Hurlburt Field, Joint Special Operations University, December 2002.
- <sup>7</sup> U. S. Special Operations Command, Special Operations Liaison Element, USSOCOM Directive 525-7 (Tampa: U. S. Special Operations Command, Undated) 3. (Draft)
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- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.,B-1.
- <sup>12</sup> Autulio J. Echevarria, "Interdependent Maneuver for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," Joint Forces Quarterly, (Autumn 2000): 17.
- <sup>13</sup> Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) George H. McNair, "The JSOAC," briefing slides with scripted commentary, Hurlburt Field, Joint Special Operations University, December 2002.
- <sup>14</sup> Joint Pub 3-56.1., GL-6.
- <sup>15</sup> Colonel Paul Harmon, USAF, telephone interview by author, 10 December 2002.
- <sup>16</sup> Colonel Douglas Legenfelder, USAF, telephone interview by author, 14 November 2002.
- <sup>17</sup> Donald H. Rumsfeld, Quadrennial Defense Review Report (Washington D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), September 2001), 34.



- <sup>18</sup> Donald H. Rumsfeld, 2002 National Military Strategy,24.
- <sup>19</sup> Rumsfeld, Quadrennial Defense Review Report, 32
- <sup>20</sup> Rumsfeld, Quadrennial Defense Review Report, 33.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> Brian E Sheridan, and Peter J. Schoomaker, United States Special Operations Forces: Posture Statement 2000, (United States Special Operations Command, 2000),2.
- <sup>23</sup> David Deptula, "Air Force Transformation," Aerospace Power Journal, (Fall 2001),87.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., 91.
- <sup>25</sup> Sheridan,3.
- <sup>26</sup> Deptula,88.
- <sup>27</sup> Robert C. Rubel, "Principles of Jointness," Joint Force Quarterly (Winter 2000-01): 47.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., 46.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., 47.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid.,154.
- <sup>31</sup> Kenneth Allard, Command, Control and the Common Defense (Washington, D. C.: Yale University Press, 1996) 37.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>33</sup> United States Air Force, Air Force Basic Doctrine, AFDD 1, (Maxwell AFB: Air Force Doctrine Center, September 1997) 23.
- <sup>34</sup> Allard, 156.
- <sup>35</sup> Allard, 155.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid. 157.
- <sup>37</sup> Allard, 160.
- <sup>38</sup> Rubel, 46-47.
- <sup>39</sup> Personal Experience while assigned to Special Operations Command, Atlantic, 1994-1997.
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- <sup>45</sup> Ibid., 4.
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- <sup>57</sup> "AFSOC SOLE Integrating SOF Requirements On Today's Battlefield," Night Flyer, July 2002. 1.
- <sup>58</sup> Colonel Douglas Legenfelter, USAF, telephone interview by author, 14 November 2002.
- <sup>59</sup> Colonel Dale Nagy, USAF, interview by author, 15 January 2003, Carlisle Barracks, PA.
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<sup>61</sup> Colonel Dale Nagy, USAF, interview by author, 15 January 2003, Carlisle Barracks, PA.

## GLOSSARY

**Command and control.** The exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of the mission. Command and control functions are performed through an arrangement of personnel, equipment communications facilities and procedures employed by a commander in planning, directing, coordinating and controlling forces and operations in the accomplishment of the mission

A starting point for command and control as stated by Kenneth Allard is classic command and control which represents the efforts of a single commander to extend his ability to control events on the battlefield, an ability that is a function of terrain, communications and weaponry. From line of sight tactical command to the most integrative command based on a robust common operational picture, command structure effectiveness is based on current and future situational awareness and timely decisions. Too much or too little information in either planning or execution cascades down to poor situational awareness, poor decisions and resultant ineffectiveness. The art is to balance the information flow to arrive at a timely and effective next step. The situation is complicated when complimentary capabilities from components are required to carry out the operational mission. The more diverse the components brought together to bring about an effect, the more agile the command and control organizational structure must be.

**Liaison.** Contact or intercommunication maintained between elements of military forces or other agencies to ensure mutual understanding and unity of purpose and action  
Winnefeld and Johnson, from their extensive analysis of six case studies from the battle of Midway through Desert Storm, validate the need for functional air component commanders to have a joint staff and senior representatives of the coordinated components' forces on duty at his operations center to ensure centralized control of joint air operations. The balance of command, control, and liaison is part of the art of operational level warfighting and contributes to unity of effort. Ensuring this balance for the special operations component as it synchronizes with the air component are the SOLE and JSOAC

**Unity of command.** Forces operating under a single commander with the requisite authority to direct all forces employed in pursuit of a common purpose. In order to achieve a single purpose a joint force must be able to plan, direct, coordinate, and control forces using an arrangement of people processes and systems that work together. This is as true today as it was in the inter war years. In 1927 when airpower was being considered as a significant piece of service planning the Joint Board of the Army and the Navy recognized three principles for the coordination (or unified action in today's terms) of armies and navies in the pursuit of common objectives:

Unity of Command. - when the objective required the hierarchal subordination of all component forces under a single commander.

Limited Unity of Command - when it was determined that the objective fell within the paramount interest of one service (component) and forces of the other were temporarily placed under the operational control of the service commander exercising paramount interest.

Close Cooperation - when the mission could be accomplished by relatively independent action of the deployed forces.

**Unity of effort.** Solidarity of purpose, effort, and command. It directs all energies, assets and activities, physical and mental, toward desired ends. Unity of effort when applied to joint operations in a theater of operations is primarily concerned with coordinated actions of armed

forces and other warfighting organizations to ensure integration and synchronization in time, space and purpose. Unity of effort in joint operations is enhanced through the application of the flexible range of command relationships.

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